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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9696

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 005305

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FOR WHA - LOURDES CUE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/19/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [VE](#) [JA](#)  
SUBJECT: JAPAN UNSURE ABOUT APPROACH TO VENEZUELA

REF: A. STATE 157005  
[1](#)B. STATE 157206

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This cable contains an action message. Please see paragraph 3.

[1](#)2. (C) Japan's approach to the proposed constitutional changes in Venezuela is a "sensitive" and "delicate" matter, MOFA South America and Caribbean Division Principal Deputy Director Akifumi Mizuguchi told Embassy Tokyo Political Officer November 20 in response to reftel demarches, delivered November 16. Because the Chavez administration is following democratic rules in proposing the amendments, Japan does not know how to respond. Mizuguchi asked 1) Specifically what action will the United States take? 2) What specific action does the United States want Japan to take besides "joining the voices of international concern?" and 3) When should these actions take place, before or after the December 2 referendum?

[1](#)3. (U) ACTION REQUEST: Please provide guidance on how to respond to these questions.  
SCHIEFFER